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Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 /072 W
----------102821 100351Z /64
O P 100240Z JAN 78
FM USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9020
AMEMBASSY BONN PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY GABORONE PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LAGOS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L USUN 0071

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PORG, SF, WA
SUBJECT: NAMIBIA: CONTACT GROUP MEETING OF JANUARY 9

REF: (A) USUN 059 (B) PRETORIA 0118

1. CONTACT GROUP MET AM JANUARY 9 TO DISCUSS MATTERS RELATING TO THE PROPOSED PROXIMITY TALKS. AFTER DECIDING ON APPROACH TO SOUTH AFRICANS CONTAINED SEPTEL, GROUP DISCUSSED FURTHER THE POSSIBILITY OF HAVING A MEETING IN NEW YORK, PRIOR TO PROPOSED PROXIMITY TALKS, OF THE CONTACT GROUP WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF WESTERN FIVE FOREIGN MINISTRIES (REF A). AS NEITHER FRENCH OR GERMAN MISSIONS HAD BEEN ABLE TO OBTAIN RESPONSES FROM CAPITALS ON PROPOSED DATE OF JANUARY 11 FOR SUCH A MEETING, AND WITH THE 11TH FAST APPROACHING, GROUP SUGGESTED THAT MEETING
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COULD ALSO BE HELD DURING THE AFTERNOON OF JANUARY 13 AND COULD CONTINUE INTO THE MORNING OF JANUARY 14. WITH OTHER CONTACT GROUP MEMBERS APPROVING BOTH ALTERNATIVE DATES, FRG AND FRANCE AGREED TO GET GOVERNMENTS' RESPONSES IMMEDIATELY. FRG HAS SINCE CALLED TO SAY THAT THE 13TH/14TH WOULD BE FINE. FRANCE WILL ADVISE AM JANUARY 10. SINCE PROXIMITY TALKS ARE BEING PUSHED BACK BEYOND THE 17TH, THE URGENCY FOR THIS MEETING HAS BEEN REDUCED

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HOWEVER, CONTACT GROUP IS QUITE ANXIOUS TO HAVE SUCH A MEETING SOON.

2. GROUP THEN CONSIDERED QUESTION OF PUBLICATION OF WESTERN FIVE PROPOSALS FOR A NAMIBIAN SETTLEMENT. FRG AND UK EXPRESSED STRONG OPPOSITION TO THE PUBLICATION OF THE PROPOSALS PRIOR TO THE START OF THE PROXIMITY TALKS. BOTH OF THEIR GOVERNMENTS BELIEVE THAT SUCH PUBLICATION WOULD LEAD TO UNHELPFUL POSTURING BY SWAPO AND SOUTH AFRICA PRIOR TO THE TALKS. FRANCE AND US EXPRESSED SUPPORT FOR EARLY PUBLICATION ARGUING THAT OTHERWISE THE INEVITABLE LEAKS WOULD CAUSE PUBLIC DISTORTION OF OUR PROPOSALS WHICH WOULD HINDER THEIR ACCEPTANCE. CANADA REMAINED NEUTRAL. IN LIGHT OF THIS STALEMATE, AMBASSADOR MCHENRY STATED THAT PERHAPS THE US CONCERN OVER LEAKS COULD BE REDUCED IF PROCEDURE WAS DEVELOPED IN WHICH THE PROPOSALS WOULD NOT BE PUBLISHED PRIOR TO THE TALKS BUT A COMPREHENSIVE ORAL PRESS BACKGROUNDER WOULD BE HELD IN NEW YORK FOR SELECTED MEMBERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL PRESS AT THE TIME THAT THE PROPOSALS ARE GIVEN TO SOUTH AFRICA AND SWAPO. SUCH A PRESS BACKGROUNDER WOULD NOT INCLUDE A DISCUSSION OF THE SPECIFICS OF THE WESTERN FIVE PROPOSALS BUT WOULD SEEK TO PROVIDE THE PRESS WITH A FULL UNDERSTANDING OF THE ISSUES AND OBSTACLES INVOLVED IN THE EFFORT TO REACH A NAMIBIAN SETTLEMENT. THE BACKGROUNDER WOULD HOPEFULLY ENABLE THE PRESS TO PLACE ANY LEAKS IN THEIR PROPER CONTEXT. THE BRITISH EXPRESSED DOUBTS ABOUT SUCH A COMPREHENSIVE DISCUSSION WITH THE PRESS PRIOR TO THE TALKS AND SUGGESTED THAT THE PRESS CONFIDENTIAL

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BACKGROUNDER BE GIVEN ONLY IF LEAKS DID IN FACT OCCUR. MCHENRY REPLIED THAT THE BRITISH SUGGESTION WOULD CLEARLY NOT SATISFY US DESIRE TO MINIMIZE THE POSSIBILITY OF LEAKS AND THAT THE TRUE FACTS WOULD NVER CATCH UP WITH THE LEAKED MATERIAL. CANADIANS REMAINED NEUTRAL IN THIS DISCUSSION, TOO, EXPRESSING ONLY CHAGRIN THAT WE HAD EVER AGREED TO PROVIDE THE PROPOSALS TO ANYONE PRIOR TO THE TALKS. WITH THE GERMANS ARGUING STRONGLY IN FAVOR OF AN EARLY PRESS BACKGROUNDER AND THE FRENCH SUPPORTING SAME AS THE BEST ALTERNATIVE, GROUP AGREED TO REFER THE MATTER TO CAPITALS FOR THEIR CONSIDERATION.

3. FOR PRETORIA: NO DECISION WAS MADE BY CONTACT GROUP WITH REGARD TO EMBASSY PRETORI'S RECOMMENDATIONS ON BRIEFING WINDHOEK GROUPS (REF B). USUN AGREES WITH YOUR RECOMMENDATION THAT BRIEFING, WHEN HELD, SHOULD BE ALONG THE LINES OF OPTION 2, HEADED BY US AND FRG AMBASSADORS. SUBSTANCE OF BRIEFING DEPENDS TO SOME EXTENT ON THE TIMING AND IS INEVITABLY CONNECTED WITH THE QUESTION OF PUBLICATION. WE MUST ASSUME THAT SUB-MISSION OF PROPOSALS TO WINDHOEK GROUPS IS TANTAMOUNT TO PUBLICA-TION. ON THE OTHER HAND, WE RECOGNIZE THAT FAILURE TO GIVE PROPOSALS TO WINDHOEK GROUPS ELIMINATES MUCH OF THE POSITIVE EFFECT WHICH SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE OF PROPOSALS MIGHT HAVE ON THE

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PARTIES, PARTICULARLY ON SWAPO.

4. IN REF B, MENTION IS MADE OF CONTACT GROUP PLANS FOR FURNISHING COPIES OF PROPOSALS TO JOURNALISTS. WE WISH TO CORRECT THIS MISUNDERSTANDING. CONTACT GROUP PLANS CALL FOR DISTRIBUTION OF PROPOSALS TO THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE FRONTLINE STATES, AFRICAN MEMBERS OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL, AND NORDIC COUNTRIES AT THE SAME TIME THAT THE PROPOSALS ARE GIVEN TO SWAPO AND SOUTH AFRICA. THERE ARE NO PLANS AS YET TO GIVE PROPOSALS TO JOURNALISTS.
MCHENRY

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